

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

Submitted by: Brian R. Barrette

Finding: There Has Been No Studies Undertaken to Determine Whether Current Policy to Spread Out Pine Needles to Cover Bare Ground Results in Less Pollutants Reaching the Lake

Background and Supporting Evidence:

Currently TRPA requires that pine needles be left on the ground to prevent run off and pollutants from adversely impacting the Lake. It has been reported that there may not be any scientific studies validating that requirement; while it is known that from a fire safety standpoint, leaving needles right up to the structure is a bad idea. Many landowners recognize this fact, and ignore TRPA, while recognizing they could be cited.

Recommendation(s) Require TRPA to undertake a scientific study to validate their requirements for leaving pine needles and other vegetation cover. At the same time, the study should look at the possibility of spreading needles or other cover on bare areas of a certain minimum size in the surrounding wildlands to determine if that is feasible. UCD or one of the other research institutions active in the Basin could be contracted to carry out the study. Peer reviewers need to include land managers and wildland fire personnel to ensure there is no bias in the study results or the study itself.

☐ **Impacts of Implementation:**

The TRPA and probably both the Lahontan and Fish and Game Departments must agree to undertake and fund the study. It is probably at least a five year study. They must also agree to suspend and action against homeowners who do not abide by the current regulations. Funding might be available from the Federal Government sources. If not TRPA needs to fund it. Cost would likely be a minimum of \$100,000 per year. UC should be approached to waive the 25% administrative charges for contracts, or the project should be put out to bid if they don't agree to waive or lower the fees.

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

Would require cooperation between the various agencies such as TRPA, the Lahontan Board, Fish and Game, the Forest Service, and others to carry out the studies.